Baiy'ah

The Basis for Organization of a Revivalist Party in Islam

Dr. Israr Ahmad

Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an Lahore

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Introduction

The present booklet is a revised and edited version of a lecture on the subject of *Baiy'ah,* delivered in English by Dr. Israr Ahmad, Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami. The lecture was originally delivered in August 1995, in Elgin, Illinois (USA). It was first published in the October-December 1996 issue of *The Qur'anic Horizons,* and now it is being presented in the form of a booklet.

Dr. Israr Ahmad (b. 1932) is well-known as a scholar and teacher of the Holy Qur'an. He firmly believes that the pathetic and wretched condition of the Muslim *Ummah* today is a punishment from Almighty Allah (SWT), the cause being the dereliction of individual and collective duties on the part of the Muslims. The only way to salvation, therefore, is for the Muslims to repent with the true spirit of repentance, and to strive for the fulfillment of all their Divinely ordained obligations. The Muslims not only need to practice Islam in their individual lives, but it is also their duty to spread and propagate the teachings of Islam throughout the world, and to struggle for the establishment of Islam as a socio-political order so that justice and peace can reign supreme.

Today in the Muslim world, we find that most of the Islamic movements have taken either to the bullet or to the ballet. Dr. Israr Ahmad, on the other hand, refers to the following saying of Imam Malik (RA): "The latter part of this community will not be reformed except by following the same process through which its initial part was reformed." He argues that the lack of success on the part of various Islamic movements is actually due to their deviation, in one way or another, from the way of the Prophet (SAW). Dr. Israr Ahmad has no doubt in his mind that the revival and establishment of Islam will be possible only by adopting the methodology of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). As derived from the study of the *Seerah,* the methodology of the Prophet

(SAW) involved the following stages: Calling people towards the light of *Iman,* Organizing those who respond into a cohesive force, Training them with respect to spiritual and moral purification and discipline, Passive Resistance in the face of persecution and oppression, Challenge and Active Resistance at the appropriate moment, and finally Armed Conflict. Dr. Israr Ahmad has spelled out the details of these phases and their application in modern times in his numerous lectures and writings. He has emphasized that the revitalization of true faith by means of the Qur'an is an essential prerequisite for Islamic renaissance. Concerning the final step, he believes that the evolution of social thought since the time of the Prophet (SAW) implies that, in our times, a *non-violent* mass movement can supplant a bilateral armed conflict, the latter not being feasible in the contemporary world. He argues that it is now possible to bring about positive and fundamental changes in Muslim societies by means of popular movements – consisting of peaceful agitation and leading to civil disobedience, if required – while strictly refraining from all sorts of violence. The struggle to revive and re-establish Islam, however, requires a disciplined organization.

According to Dr. Israr Ahmad, the Western constitutional and democratic model works satisfactorily as the basis of organizational structure for community work, institution building, and *da'wah* work. However, he argues that this model is not suitable for the purpose of establishing a truly revivalist party. Further, Dr. Israr Ahmad also points out that the organizational model we find in the *Seerah* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is based on *baiy'ah* (pledge of allegiance). The Prophet (SAW) was a Messenger of Almighty Allah (SWT) and every command from him had to be followed; the reason he took *baiy'ah* from the Companions (RAA), therefore, was only to leave a model for his *Ummah.* The Caliphs after him continued the same system, and after them almost all of the revivalist movements have adopted the same system of *baiy'ah* for the purpose of organization. In the

Western constitutional and democratic model, a number of people who want to achieve the same goals get together and form an organization in which the majority vote is decisive. In the system based on *baiy'ah*, on the other hand, one person gives a call that he is going to initiate the struggle for the revival and establishment of the *Deen* of Allah (SWT); he then invites people to join him in this cause (Cf., Surah Al-Saff 61:14). In such a system, the leader (or *ameer*) is required to consult with his associates (or *rufaqa*) but is not bound by the majority decision (Cf., Surah Aal-e-Imran 3:159). The only difference is that while each and every command given by the Prophet (SAW) had to be followed, the leader of a revivalist party can be obeyed not in an absolute sense but only within the bounds of the *Shari'ah* (i.e., *fil Mar'uf*).

Dr. Israr Ahmad has made it clear elsewhere that no revivalist party can claim for itself the status of *Al-Jama'ah*, a term applicable only to the collective organization of the entire Muslim *Ummah* under a single leader or *ameer*. Although ideal from the Islamic perspective, this unified state of the Muslim *Ummah* does not exist in the real world. Dr. Israr Ahmad believes that the internal discipline of a revivalist party that is working to re-establish Islam should be based on the Islamic ideal of "listening and obeying" to the *ameer*, a discipline that can only be achieved by following the Prophetic model of *baiy'ah*. He is firmly of the opinion that an amorphous (and anonymous!) body of Islamic workers, scattered all over the world and without a well-defined leadership, hardly merits the expression "the Islamic movement." It is at best a hypothetical entity. Going beyond "creating a New Civilization of Islam," Dr. Israr Ahmad is aiming at a concentrated, centralized, and concerted effort to establish Islamic socio-politico order in toto, initially in Pakistan and then in other states. For this he is following the prophetic model of organization in the form of *bai'yah* and well-disciplined party structure.

Dr. Ahmed Afzaal

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam! The topic of my lecture this evening is *The Importance, The Nature, and The Basis for Organization of a Revivalist Party in Islam, with Special Reference to the Institution of* Bai'yah.

All of you are well aware that I am, basically and essentially, a student of the Holy Qur'an, and, in addition, since I also try to share with others whatever understanding I gain from the Holy Book, you can also call me a teacher or a tutor of the Qur'an.

The Relevance of *Sunnah*

However, I am going to base today's lecture primarily on some traditions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and only secondarily on Qur'anic verses. Why so? Let me explain this by giving you an example.

Every Muslim is cognizant of the importance that the Holy Qur'an attaches to the "establishment of *Salat*." Although we find that all the essential constituents of *Salat* — including *qayam, ruku', sajdah, wudu,* and *tayummum* — are mentioned in the Qur'an, a systematic scheme of performing the *Salat* cannot be derived from these scattered references. We have no other option but to go to the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for guidance, because it is only there that we would find the various parts of *Salat* joined and arranged in a manner that can be described as a systematic pattern.

Similarly, the subject of *Organized Revivalist Struggle in Islam* cannot be dealt with satisfactorily without resorting

to the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Even though we find the different elements and constituents of this subject scattered in different places throughout the Holy Qur'an, we still need the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) if we are to have a complete and full view of the concept of *Organization in Islam*.

The Forgotten Truth

The first tradition of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that I want you to focus your attention on is the one reported by his Companion Harith Al-Ash'ari (RAA). This *hadith* has been included in *Mishkat Al-Masabih (Kitaab al-Imarah), Musnad* of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (RA), and the *Jame'* of Imam Tirmidhi (RA). The wording of this *hadith* is extremely important. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is reported to have said:

﴿ اٰمُرُكُم بِخَمسٍ [اللّٰهُ امرَنی بِهِنَّ] بِالجَماعةِ وَالسَّمعِ وَالطَّاعةِ ، وَالهِجرةِ ، وَالجهادِفی سَبیلِ اللّٰه ﴾ (رواه احمد والترمذی)

> I declare obligatory upon you five things; Allah (SWT) has commanded me to do so. They are: organization, listening, obeying, making *Hijrah*, and making *Jihad* for the cause of Allah.

I assume that most of the brothers and sisters in this audience may be hearing this *hadith* for the first time. Please compare this *hadith* with the one which deals with the five pillars of Islam. According to this, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has said:

﴿بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلٰى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَّا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلٰوةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكٰوةِ، وَحَجِّ الْبَيْتِ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ﴾ (رواه البخاری ومسلم)

Islam is based upon five things: the *Shahadah* that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad (SAW) is His messenger, to offer the Prayers, to pay *Zakat*, to perform *Hajj*, and to fast during the month of *Ramadan*.

As you know, the familiar concept of the five pillars of Islam is actually based upon this tradition. And this is a very well-known *hadith*, very often repeated, very often narrated. Although if you consider its wording carefully, you would realize that no explicit order is being given here. That Islam is based on five things is not a command; rather, it is a simple statement of fact. On the other hand, in the *hadith* that I have quoted, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has very emphatically ordered us to adhere to these five things — organization, listening, obeying, *Hijrah*, and *Jihad*. Yet this *hadith* is not as popular as the one about the five pillars. In fact, a vast majority of Muslims is virtually oblivious of such a tradition. Let me narrate an incident here.

This happened about twenty years back. I came across this *hadith* through Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who first quoted it in 1912 in his magazine *Al-Hilal*, and also through Maulana Sayyid Abul 'Ala Maududi who quoted it in one of his lectures delivered in 1946 in Muradpur in the Sialkot District (later published as a booklet entitled *Shahadat-e-Haq*). However, neither of them gave the source of this tradition. That is, they did not mention as to where from did they get this *hadith*? I was curious about the

source, and so I approached a prominent scholar of Islamic sciences, who was in fact a *Sheikh-ul-Hadith* (an expert and a teacher of *hadith*) at an important Islamic institution in Lahore. I asked him about the source (*maakhaz* and *sanad*) of this tradition. And he said: "The wording of this *hadith* is rather unfamiliar. I don't recall it."

Now the amazing thing is that this tradition, as I mentioned earlier, is included in *Mishkat,* which is the primer of *Ilm Al-Hadith,* the very first book that is taught in this discipline. Still, an *'alim* who is considered an authority in *hadith* could not recall reading or hearing these words. Is it not a very serious matter indeed? There has to be a reason why a significant *hadith* would just vanish from the consciousness of both, the scholars and the general public.

How We Lost Our Way

As you know, Islam is much more than a religion; it is, in fact, the all-encompassing *Deen,* based upon absolute and unconditional obedience to Almighty Allah (SWT). It includes "religious" features – that is, a set of metaphysical beliefs, modes of worship, social customs and rituals, as well as what is commonly regarded as the "secular" elements – those dealing with social, economic, and political spheres of human life. During the long period of decline of the Muslim *Ummah,* starting from the end of the Rightly Guided Caliphate down to the present century, what has happened is that slowly and insidiously our concept of Islam has undergone a total transformation – *decay,* to be more exact. As a result of this transformation, *Deen* has been turned into a *madhab,* a mere religion. The focus is now restricted to the dogmatic and ritualistic framework of Islam, while the issue of

establishing and maintaining the *Deen* as a politico-socio-economic order has slowly lost its significance and has gone completely into oblivion.

During the era of Western Colonialism, we came across the "religion" of Christianity. As you know, this is a very peculiar religion, in that it has no law, no *Shari'ah*. Christianity consists of a dogma, some ethical and moral teachings, a bit of mysticism, and that is all. Christianity does not prescribe any politico-socio-economic system. It does not possess even any legal frame-work. So, under the impact of Western imperialism, we started to use the English word "religion" – more suited to Christianity – with reference to Islam, and began to view this God-given *Deen* as nothing more than a private affair. The dominant system of Muslim lands as well as the law that was enforced upon us was no longer Islam; rather, it was an entirely secular polity that was dictated by our European masters. When the collective aspects of Islam went out of our sight, they inevitably went out of our mind as well. The result is that many of the Muslims find it incredible when they are told that Islam has a complete and viable politico-socio-economic system of its own.

Thus, we find that, during the centuries of decline, the concept of Islam as a *Deen* vanished from our minds. Even during the Colonial rule, we were allowed to have our own beliefs; we were free to perform *Salat*, to pay *Zakat*, to fast during the month of *Ramadan*, and to perform *Hajj*; we were also free to celebrate the birth of our children with *aqeeqa*, to solemnize our marriages with *nikah*, and to bury our dead in the traditional manner prescribed by the *Sunnah*. That is why these aspects of Islam continue to remain under our focus. But since during the Colonial rule our social system, our economic system, and our political system were no longer in practice, these aspects of Islam gradually faded away from our collective mind.

The Meaning of *Hijrah*

Now, let us examine more closely the words of the *hadith* under discussion. We are going to analyze the five things ordained by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in reverse order, and you will know the reason for this in a short while. First of all, let us consider the last two items – *Hijrah* and *Jihad*. These are actually two aspects of the same entity. As you know, we often come across the negative aspect before the positive one. For instance, we say "There is no god except Allah." First there is a negation of all gods, followed by the affirmation of Almighty Allah (SWT) as the only being worthy of worship and absolute or unqualified obedience. Similarly, we find that *Hijrah* is a negative way of expressing the same obligation that is positively represented by the term *Jihad*. In *Hijrah*, you leave something; in *Jihad*, you strive towards something. So *Hijrah* and *Jihad* are, so to say, two sides of the same coin.

There are numerous levels and stages as far as both *Hijrah* and *Jihad* are concerned, but I will present before you only the first or the initial level and then the final or the ultimate level. I hope that you would get a fairly clear idea of the different levels of these two obligations by becoming aware of their first and last stages.

What is the first stage of *Hijrah*? What is its beginning? Where does the process of *Hijrah* start? Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was asked this question: What kind of *Hijrah* is supreme? Which *Hijrah* is most valuable in the sight of Almighty Allah (SWT)? Please note the answer that was given by the Prophet. He said, the supreme *Hijrah* is that you give up whatever your Lord doesn't like, that you abandon all those things and all those practices that are abhorrent and hateful in the sight

of Almighty Allah (SWT). This is the supreme kind of *Hijrah*.

If one is to decide today that he will live for the sake of Allah (SWT) and die for His sake too, the first thing he will have to do is to make this kind of *Hijrah*. If there is any element of *riba* or interest in his profession or his trading then he would have to purge them of it. If his social life is full of practices that amount to transgressions of the *Shari'ah*, then he must give up those habits and customs, irrespective of how much chic and trendy they may be in the sight of his friends and his colleagues.

So, giving up whatever is not liked by Almighty Allah (SWT) is the first stage, the first rung of the ladder of *Hijrah*. But what about its climax? What is the final and ultimate stage of *Hijrah*? We know that the struggle to establish the *Deen* of Allah is obligatory upon all of us. If, during the course of that struggle, a time comes when all those who are engaged in this endeavor are required to migrate, and to assemble at a specified place in order to accumulate and concentrate all the available resources before launching the final offensive, then this is the time for the final stage of *Hijrah*. One will have to leave his home, and properties, and friends, and relatives, and even the much beloved and cherished homeland – not to raise the standard of living, not to enjoy life in a comfortable and secure environment – but for the sake of Allah's pleasure alone.

Think about the *Hijrah* that was made by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his Companions (RAA) when they migrated from Makkah to Madinah. They left their homes, and families, and their valuables. They left the city of their forefathers. They left the land where they had spent their entire lives. They left the place where their fathers and their father's fathers were buried. They even

left the most precious and revered place in the whole world, the *Kaa'bah*. And they migrated to a new and unfamiliar place. They migrated to Madinah.

And what was the purpose behind this migration? Was it to raise their standard of living? Was it to prosper and flourish? Was it to increase their business prospects? You know what the reason was. They migrated for the sake of Allah (SWT), to make the *Deen* of Allah supreme, and for no other reason at all.

The Significance of *Jihad*

Now the other side of the coin. *Jihad!* What is the first stage of *Jihad* and what is its final stage? Again, we find that a question was put to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), about the supreme kind of *Jihad*. What sort of *Jihad* is most valuable in the sight of Almighty Allah (SWT)? And the Prophet replied: the supreme kind of *Jihad* is that you struggle against your own baser self, your own *al-nafs al-ammarah*, and make it obedient to Allah (SWT). In another *hadith*, the Allah's Messenger (SAW) has said that the real *mujahid* is one who strives against the baser desires of his own self. As you know, in addition to the *fitrah* or the spiritual soul, we also have an animal being within ourselves. What I mean is that all of us have the lower instincts and carnal desires of our animal self. And these instincts and desires are blind, as they want nothing but their own immediate gratification. It makes absolutely no difference to these urges whether this satisfaction comes from *halal* or from *haram*, i.e., from the permissible or from the unlawful. So what are we required to do? We need to control these blind instincts and subjugate them to the commands of Almighty Allah (SWT). And this, in fact, is the first level, the first rung of the ladder of *Jihad*.

What about the ultimate and final stage of *Jihad*?

Again, all of us are obliged to struggle our utmost in establishing the *Deen* of Allah (SWT). If, during this struggle, a time comes when all those who are engaged in this endeavor are required to come out and confront the forces of *kufr* and *shirk*, and to fight and clash with these forces and to risk their lives in doing so, then this will be the final and ultimate stage of *Jihad*. Thus, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is reported to have said that if a Muslim dies and he had neither participated in any war for the cause of Allah (SWT), nor had he a desire to take part in such a war, then he dies in the state of a certain kind of *nifaq*, i.e., hypocrisy, and not true *Iman*. If you have genuine faith in Allah (SWT), and you know that it is your inescapable duty to make His *Deen* supreme and to establish His Sovereignty, then you have to have a burning desire, a strong yearning to be able to participate in the war for the sake of Allah (SWT). It may be that the time for such armed clash doesn't come in your life. As you know, many of the Companions (RAA) died before the Islamic movement entered the phases of active resistance and armed conflict. They never got the chance to participate in any of the battles. But, of course, the desire and the urge to fight in the way of Allah (SWT) was there in their hearts. If there is no such desire then it means there is no real *Iman* in the heart.

Organized Party Formation as an Inescapable Prerequisite

Now consider this question: If you were to undertake the twin obligations of *Hijrah* and *Jihad*, do you honestly feel that this can be done without a united and disciplined party? Can you fulfill these obligations alone? As an individual? Sure, you can strive against the sinful impulses of your own *nafs* in isolation, but can you establish the *Deen* of Allah (SWT) in your individual

capacity? Is any single person that powerful and resourceful as to be able to establish the Islamic System of Social Justice by working alone? The answer is definitely in the negative. A party, an organized group is essential, unavoidable, inescapable. It is the cardinal requirement for bringing about any change in the society. You have to organize as a party.

The *hadith* which we are discussing is very meaningful, in that the very first thing it enjoins upon the Muslims is that they should to be in the form of a party. The party, the discipline, the organization is to be seen, therefore, as a prerequisite for undertaking the last two obligations, *Hijrah* and *Jihad.* At this point I would like to quote a few more *ahadith* about the importance of collectivity, of *jama'ah.*

According to Imam Tirmidhi (RA), Umar Ibn Khattab (RAA) reported that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

﴿عَلَيْكُم بِالجَماعَةِ ، وَإِيَّاكُم وَالفُرقَةِ ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيطانَ مَعَ الوَاحِدِ ،
وهُوَمِنَ الإثْنَينِ أَبعَدُ﴾ (رواه الترمذى)

> It is obligatory upon you to be in the form of a party, and you are forbidden from being alone. Satan becomes the companion of the person who is alone; but if there are two Muslims, he runs away.

Note how the Prophet (SAW) has warned that if you are alone, not attached to a party or group, Satan will find you an easy prey and he will be able to easily mislead you away from the straight path.

According to another *hadith*, reported by Abdullah Ibn Umar (RAA), Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

﴿يَدُاللهِ عَلَى الجَمَاعَةِ ، وَمَنْ شَذَّ شَذَّ إِلَى النَّارِ﴾ (رواه الترمذى)

> The Hand of Allah is upon the *jama'ah*. Whoever cuts himself off from the group is thrown into Hell-fire.

It means that the help, the succor, the assistance, and the support of Almighty Allah (SWT) is for the collectivity of Muslims, not individuals. And if a Muslim separates and detaches himself then, according to the *hadith* quoted above, he becomes an easy prey for Satan who will mislead him from the straight path. And what will be the result in the Hereafter? He will be thrown in the fire of Hell.

Third *hadith* is actually a saying of Umar Ibn Khattab (RAA), and so, technically speaking, it is an *athar* (which is a saying, practice or tacit approval of a Companion of the Prophet) and not a *khabar* (which is defined as a saying, practice or tacit approval of the Prophet himself). Umar Ibn Khattab (RAA), the second caliph of Islam, says that,

﴿إِنَّهُ لَا إِسْلَامَ إِلَّا بِجَمَاعَةٍ، وَلَا جَمَاعَةَ إِلَّا بِإِمَارَةٍ، وَلَا امارة

إِلَّا بِطَاعَةٍ﴾ (رواه الدارمی)

> There is no Islam without *jama'ah*, there is no *jama'ah* without an *ameer*, there is no use having an *ameer* if he is not obeyed.

Importance of Collectivity

Before proceeding further, let me give you a glimpse of the general nature of our *Deen*. I have mentioned in the beginning the great importance that our *Deen* attaches to the institution of *Salat*. Please note that for men, it is necessary to perform the obligatory *Salat* in congregation, unless there is a genuine excuse. The offering of the

congregational prayers exhibits in a symbolic form the general discipline that is required by Islam in all matters.

What happens during congregational *Salat*? There is one leader or *Imam* who is in charge, and all others follow him in a disciplined manner. No one can perform any movement ahead of the *Imam*. We must respond to his cautions. If someone raises his head from the *ruku'* ahead of the *Imam*, he'll lose his *Salat*. Even if the *Imam* commits a mistake, all you are allowed to do is to point this out by saying *Allaho Akbar* or *Subhan Allah*. But if the *Imam* persists in his mistake, then it doesn't mean that you can simply walk away from the congregation. Even if you are one hundred percent sure that the *Imam* has committed an error, you are still not allowed to leave the *jama'ah*, the congregation. Of course, you can discuss the matter after the *Salat* is over, and the *Imam* must repeat the *Salat* if he has indeed committed a mistake, but the important point is that you are obliged to remain with the congregation even if you don't fully agree with the leader.

Now consider the basic institution of the Islamic social system. What is that fundamental bond *nikah* and what is its essence and significance? A woman agrees to obey her husband – within the limits set by the *Shari'ah*, of course, as you are not allowed to obey anyone if that obedience necessitates any transgression of the Divine law – and offers herself in marriage to him, who accepts the offer. There is no practical way of establishing a strong and healthy family system except through regimentation and discipline. That is why Islam has made it obligatory upon the wife to obey her husband. Of course she can advise, recommend, suggest, argue, and plead; but if she does not obey her husband then she is acting contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Let me give you a third example. If two people are

traveling together, then, according to the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), one of them should be the *ameer* and he should lead and guide the other. If two people are going to offer their obligatory prayers, then one should act as the *Imam* and the other would be the *muqtadi* or follower. All this clearly demonstrates the importance of collectivity in Islam, and also sheds light on the nature of organized and collective life in our *Deen*, which is our next topic.

The Islamic Concept of Party Organization

In order to facilitate our understanding of the nature of revivalist party's organization in Islam, we should have before us an outline of how this issue is being dealt with in the contemporary world. The modern world has all sorts of associations, institutions, institutes, corporations, leagues, social and business organizations, political parties, and special interest groups. All these are different forms of organization. In each one of them there are two items of primary significance: the *memorandum*, which describes the purpose, aims, and objectives of the proposed organization, and the *constitution*.

In view of the universal methods that are employed in this respect, we find that there are a number of features common to all such constitutions. For instance, there are provisions for membership, so that a person who accepts the memorandum and the constitution or the articles of association, and agrees to fulfill the conditions of membership, is admitted as a member. In this way, the organization grows from below. The members would then elect their president or chairman or director, whatever you may call him. Then elections are to be held for a managing committee or an advisory board or some other forum of *shura*. Finally, the issue of division of authority and

responsibilities has to be settled and a system of checks and balances has to be evolved in order to monitor those with authority.

Thus, we see that all these provisions are found, in one form or another, whenever an attempt is made to establish some sort of an organization. All these different forms of organization are permissible and perfectly *mubah* in Islam. There is nothing in either the Holy Qur'an or the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that can repudiate the legitimacy of all these different types of organization.

What, then, is my point? While the various forms of organizations for group activity prevalent in the world today are permissible in Islam, I would like to make it very clear that no reference about any of these can be found anywhere in the Holy Qur'an or in the life and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In spite of this, I still believe that none of these are *haram* or prohibited in Islam. This opinion is based upon one of the fundamental principles of Islamic jurisprudence: everything and every practice is to be considered lawful and permissible unless proved otherwise.

On the other hand, the type of organization that we come across repeatedly in the Holy Qur'an, in the life and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) — as well as in the whole of the thirteen hundred year's history of the Muslim *Ummah* — is based upon a pattern which is unlike that usually found in today's world. I will discuss this pattern in a short while.

Basic Terminology

Before proceeding further, let me explain two key phrases or terms in relation to the Islamic concept of party formation. The first term is that of *ameer*. What does it mean? There is a related word in Arabic, *aamir*, which is

used in Urdu in place of the English expression "dictator." Now, as you know, the word "dictator" is used in a pejorative or derogatory sense. It is certainly not considered to be a polite or respectful thing to say about a leader that he acts in a "dictatorial" manner or that he is a "dictator." This is because we live in an era of democracy and people's rule, and therefore anything considered contrary to the high ideals of democracy is to be shunned at all cost. But please note that the word *ameer* is more intense and stronger than simple *aamir*.

Anyone who is familiar with the technical nuances of Arabic language will appreciate this point: when a person is performing a certain act, he is *faa'il*, e.g., *qadir*, *'alim*, *aamir*, etc., but when the capacity and the characteristic of performing that act becomes an integral and permanent part of his personality, then he will be called *fa'eel*, e.g., *qadeer*, *'aleem*, and, similarly, *ameer*. So, please note again that the term used in the *ahadith* to describe a leader is *ameer*, which is much stronger and more profound than *aamir*.

Let me quote a *hadith* here. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has said that whoever obeys me, he actually obeys Almighty Allah (SWT), and whoever disobeys me, he is guilty of disobeying Almighty Allah (SWT); moreover, a person who obeys the *ameer* appointed by me actually obeys me, and he who disobeys the *ameer* appointed by me, disobeys me.

Of course, when the Prophet (SAW) was alive, he himself was the *ameer* of Muslims, commander in-chief of the army, and head of the state. But even at that time there was a chain of leaders who were appointed by him, and these leaders were in charge at different levels of authority. For instance, in a *ghazwa* or battle, the chief commander was, of course, Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

himself, but there were numerous subordinates under him: there would be a commander of the right wing, a commander of the left wing, and so on. Then each wing was composed of various smaller units, and these smaller units would have their own commanders. Thus, there was a chain of local leaders or commanders or *umara*, and that chain had to be kept intact and unbroken at all times. Any breach in this sequence of authority would have, inevitably, resulted in chaos and disorder. And this is exactly what happened during the battle of *Uhad*.

In the battle of *Uhad*, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had appointed a group of fifty archers – under Abdullah Ibn Jubayr (RAA)– on a hilly pass a little to the left of his main force, and had told them not to leave that place even if they see that the rest of the Muslims have been killed. But when, during the course of the battle, the archers saw that the enemy was defeated, they did exactly what they were prohibited from doing: they left their post. The local commander, Abdullah Ibn Jubayr (RAA), warned them not to leave their place, ordering them to stay. But it seems that the archers argued, saying that the order of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was binding in case of defeat, and now we have won. The battle is finished and the disbelievers are routed, so there is no point in staying here.

Thirty-five archers disobeyed their local commander. The enemy horsemen saw their opportunity to attack from the rear, and played havoc in the unprotected and exposed ranks of the Muslim army. Seventy Muslims were martyred due to this mistake. Almighty Allah (SWT) punished the entire Muslim force for this show of indiscipline and disobedience of the local *ameer*.

Think about the extreme importance that our *Deen* attaches to discipline. Abdullah Ibn Jubayr (RAA) was

directly appointed by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and after the death of the Prophet, the Muslims elected their own *khalifah* or *ameer* with mutual consultation. But there is a *hadith*, reported by Irbad Ibn Saaria (RAA), according to which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has said that it is obligatory upon you to listen and obey even if a slave establishes himself as your *ameer* (i.e., without your consent), provided he doesn't give any order that is contrary to the *Shari'ah.** This is the value of discipline and collectivity, that even if someone gets hold of the power without the approval of the *Ummah,* we are still required to obey him within the limits of the *Shari'ah,* in order to avoid unnecessary chaos and disarray. Disobedience is permissible only when there is clear and flagrant violation of the *Shari'ah,* and armed rebellion is advisable only if there is enough strength available to bring about a permanent and stable change.

But there is another type of self-proclaimed *ameer,* an *ameer* like myself. What kind of *ameer* am I? I want to launch a revolutionary struggle in Pakistan in order to establish the Islamic System of Social Justice, or, in other words, to establish the system of *Khilafah.* But I cannot

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* This tradition as quoted by Imam Nawawi (RA) in his *Arba'ain* includes the following words: "I counsel you to fear Allah (may He be glorified) and to listen and obey even if a slave establishes himself as your leader." Imam Nawawi (RA) has quoted this tradition on the authority of Imam Tirmidhi (RA) and Imam Abu Daud (RA). But the wording of this tradition, as it appears in the collection of *ahadith* by Imam Tirmidhi (RA) and Imam Abu Daud (RA), as well as those by Imam Ibn Majah (RA) and Imam Ahmad (RA), does not include the words "establishes himself as your leader." In his *Sharah* of Sahih Muslim, however, Imam Nawawi (RA) writes under another *hadith*: "If a slave establishes himself as an *ameer* (through force) and runs the affairs of the government in accordance with the Qur'an and *Sunnah,* then it is obligatory (for the Muslims) to obey him. However, under normal circumstances when the leaders are being elected by the free choice of the Muslims, it would not be right to elect a slave."

achieve this on my own. I need associates and colleagues and comrades. So what did I do? I made my ideas known to the general public, and I made this call: Who would help me in this noble endeavor? Who would join hands with me? Who would support me in establishing the sovereignty of Almighty Allah (SWT) in the world?

Nobody has elected me an *ameer*. I started my mission, I gave my program, I charted a methodology. Whoever agrees with all this can come and join hands with me and become my associate. This type of organization grows from top down. Since people responded to my call, I became their *ameer*. No election is needed here.

So, now you can appreciate that there are four different types of *umara*:

- First, an *ameer* who is appointed as a leader of a local community or unit by some higher authority, i.e., by a higher *ameer*. The *umara* nominated by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were of this variety.

- Second, an *ameer* who is elected or selected by the Muslims as their ruler through mutual consultation. The four Rightly Guided Caliphs belonged to this variety.

- Third, an *ameer* who becomes ruler of the Muslims by taking control of the power with force and without their consent. Most of the kings and emperors of the Muslim history, as well as the military rulers of today, belong to this variety.

- And, finally, the person who wants to undertake some mission for the cause of Islam and needs the help and assistance of other Muslims; he is initially a *da'ee* (one who calls or invites people) because he starts by calling people to join hands with him, and when people do join him, he naturally becomes their *ameer*.

So far, we have been trying to understand the meaning and implications of the word *ameer*, as used by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The second term that is noteworthy in this regard, and this too belongs to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, is *sam'-o-ta'ah*, that is, *listening and obeying*. Please note that, just like "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil" is an expression of great significance made immortal by the Holy Qur'an, the words "listening and obeying" have also become a permanent part of the Qur'anic terminology and idiom. Moreover, just like "enjoining the good" cannot be separated from its mate "forbidding the evil," we see that "listening" cannot be severed from its twin "obeying."

All of you know that *listening and obeying* is actually the proverbial slogan or catch phrase of the military. All that an ordinary soldier is supposed to do is to *listen* and *obey*, i.e., to receive orders from his superiors and to carry them out. He is simply not allowed to argue with his commander. He cannot demand the reason or the strategy behind each and every move that is being made in the battle front. It is obvious that a soldier would be most effective if he does as he is told by the higher authority in command.

This great discipline of the military is vividly depicted in the poem *Charge of the Light Brigade* by Tennyson, describing an event that took place in 1854 during the Crimean War. What happened was that the brigade was given the order to charge and advance towards the enemy lines. But there were cannons everywhere, right, left, and front. It was obvious to every man that someone has made a blunder in issuing such a suicidal order. But nobody argued, no one demanded an explanation, no one questioned the rationality of the order. They all charged forward, just as they were told, and perished:

Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.

Let me quote three verses of the Holy Qur'an, and I hope that they would sufficiently illustrate the importance of *listening and obeying* in the context of the Islamic way of life.

﴿ اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ط كُلٌّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ
وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ قف لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ قف
وَقَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ز غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ O ﴾ (البقره ٢:٢٨٥)

The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the faithful. Each one believes in Allah and His angels, and His Books, and His messengers, and (say that) we make no distinction between the messengers. And (in addition) they say: "We listen and we obey, and we seek Your forgiveness, O Lord, for to You we shall return in the end." (Al-Baqarah 2:258)

﴿وَاذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيْثَاقَهُ الَّذِىْ وَاثَقَكُمْ بِهٖ لا اِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَ
اَطَعْنَا ز وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ O ﴾ (المائده ٥:٧)

Remember the favors He bestowed on you, and the covenant He cemented you with, when you said: "We (agree to) listen and obey." Heed Allah for he knows the secrets of your hearts. (Al-Ma'ida 5:7)

﴿فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَ اسْمَعُوْا وَاَطِيْعُوْا.... ﴾ (التغابن ٦٤:١٦)

So heed Allah as much as you can, and listen and obey.... (Al-Taghabun 64:16)

The Basis of Organization in Islam

I have already pointed out that the type of organization that we repeatedly come across in the Holy Qur'an, and in the life and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) — as well as in the entire thirteen hundred year's history of the Muslim *Ummah* — is based on a pattern that is distinct from that usually found in today's world. And this pattern is one of *bai'yah*, or "pledge of allegiance." Now, the question is: what is meant by *bai'yah*?

The word *bai'yah* is from the Arabic verb"باع يبيع" meaning *to sell*. And what is the basic nature of selling? *Exchange!* You *exchange* your dollars for a loaf or a cake. You *exchange* your rupees for a bag of onions. Before the invention of coins and currency, people would exchange one merchandise for another, and this, as you know, is called barter system. It makes no difference whether you call the dollars the price and the loaf the merchandise, or you call the dollars the merchandise and the loaf the price. This is because whenever there is selling, buying is taking place as well. Both can be called prices as well as the commodities.

I have given you this background so that you can appreciate and feel for yourself the beauty, the elegance, and the splendor of the following Qur'anic verse:

﴿ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ اشْتَرٰى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۗ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ
فِى سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ فَيَقْتُلُوْنَ وَ يُقْتَلُوْنَ ۗ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِى التَّوْرٰىةِ وَالْاِنْجِيْلِ
وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ۗ وَمَنْ اَوْفٰى بِعَهْدِهٖ مِنَ اللّٰهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوْا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِىْ بَايَعْتُمْ بِهٖ ۗ وَ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝ ﴾ (التوبه ٩:١١١)

Allah has verily bought the lives and possessions of

> the faithful in exchange for Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, and kill and are killed. This is a promise incumbent on Him, as in the Torah, so the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is more true to his promise than Allah? So rejoice at the bargain you have made with Him; for this will be supreme triumph. (At-Tawbah 9:111)

This is one of the most important verses of the Holy Qur'an, but, unfortunately, it no longer occupies the pivotal position in our lives as it did in the lives of the Companions (RAA). This verse talks about a bargain or a transaction between the *mo'min* (the faithful, the believer) on the one hand and Almighty Allah (SWT) on the other. In this transaction, Almighty Allah (SWT) is the purchaser and the believer is the seller. When a person has *Iman* (true faith), it means that he has already committed himself to devote and dedicate his life, his capabilities, his energies, his resources, his possessions, and his wealth for the sake of Almighty Allah (SWT) and, in return, he is given the promise of the rewards of the Paradise in the life to come. This is the *bai'yah* between the faithful and Almighty Allah (SWT). On the basis of this *bai'yah,* what are the believers doing? They are fighting in the way of Allah (SWT), they are fighting to make the *Deen* of Allah supreme, they are fighting to establish the Islamic Order in its totality. And, during the course of this conflict, they are killing their opponents, the enemies of Allah (SWT), and they are being killed by them as well.

The transaction between the believer and Allah (SWT) mentioned above is not a cash bargain; rather, it's a credit bargain. I am required to invest all that I have, including my life and property, for the cause of Almighty Allah (SWT). And what do I get in return? A promise. A word of assurance from Allah that He will reward me in the Hereafter. Anyone can see that there is a lot of risk

involved in this venture. What if I don't get anything in return? What if I am not compensated for my sacrifices? I am willing to surrender and renounce everything I have in this world, but what if I don't receive any recompense? Surely I don't want to be a double loser. So why should I make sacrifices? Isn't one in hand better than two in the bush?

It is quite natural to have doubts regarding the mere promise of a future payment. This is exactly why Almighty Allah (SWT) has reassured us in a most emphatic manner that the promise is on Him. Don't let any misgivings come in your way. Don't let any doubts or suspicions stop you from striving in the way of Allah (SWT). The promise is on Him. He will most certainly fulfill His promise. He has made this promise thrice: in the Torah, in the Gospel, and then in the Qur'an. And who can be more faithful and trustworthy in his promise than Allah (SWT) Himself? So rejoice and celebrate, because of this bargain you have made with Almighty Allah (SWT). What you are asked to give up is so trivial and insignificant, and what you'll get is so glorious and exalted. This, indeed, is the biggest triumph, the supreme and ultimate success.

Here, we see that the verse under discussion starts with the verb " اشترى " and ends with the noun "بيعكم". What is the difference between the two? The first refers to simple *purchasing*, the second refers to the process of *transaction between two parties*. It was a common practice among the Arabs that, when it came to buying and selling, they would argue about the price or the quality of the merchandise, but when the deal was finally settled, they would shake hands with each other. This handshake was a symbol that the bargain has been settled, that no party can now go back on his words. This final agreement, symbolized by a handshake, is called "مبايعه " and this, in

fact, is the basis of *bai'yah*.

The important issue here is that the transaction is to take place between Almighty Allah (SWT) and the believer, but we cannot deal directly with the Lord and Creator of the universe. It means that we need an intermediary, a go-between, to mediate this transaction. Allah (SWT) is purchasing the life and possessions of a *mo'min*, and the *mo'min* is willing to sell, but who would tell him how and when and in what manner to invest his life and possessions? For twelve long years in Makkah, the order of the day was to remain passive, non-violent, patient; in Madinah, the order was to go ahead, to fight, to confront. But who decided all this? Herein comes the role of the organization, of the *ameer*, and of listening and obeying.

Indeed it is all very simple and logical. Almighty Allah (SWT) is the buyer, and *mo'min*, the seller. In between these two was the hand of Muhammad. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. The real purchaser or the buyer is, of course, Almighty Allah (SWT), but the pledge of obedience and allegiance was given to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Thus, the Holy Qur'an says:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ ط يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ج فَمَنْ نَّكَثَ
فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ج وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عٰهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا ○﴾ (الفتح ٤٨:١٠)

Those who swear allegiance to you (O Prophet!) indeed swear allegiance to Allah; and Allah's hand is over theirs. Then whosoever breaks the promise, breaks it to his own loss; but whosoever fulfills the promise made to Allah will receive a great reward

from Him. (Al-Fath 48:10)

This makes it a trilateral agreement. Selling of the life and property by the believer to Almighty Allah (SWT), but the promise of obedience to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The *mo'min*, in effect, says to the Prophet (SAW) that my life and property is at your disposal, you will tell me what to do with them, you will guide me as to how and when and in what manner to sacrifice them. The ultimate purpose remains the attainment of Allah's pleasure and His rewards in the Hereafter. This is *bai'yah*, pure and simple.

Please note that the wordings of the *bai'yah* that was given by Muslim men to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are not mentioned anywhere in the Holy Qur'an, although they are described fully in *ahadith*. On the other hand, we find that the wordings of the *bai'yah* of women (*bai'yah al-nisa*) are clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Thus, we read:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَآءَكَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰٓ أَن لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ بِٱللَّهِ
شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَٰدَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَٰنٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُۥ بَيْنَ
أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِى مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَٱسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ ٱللَّهَ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝ ﴾ (الممتحنة ٦٠:١٢)

O Prophet, when believing women come to you and swear on oath that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor steal, nor fornicate, nor kill their children, nor accuse others for what they have fabricated themselves, nor disobey you in any rightful thing, then you should accept their allegiance, and ask forgiveness of Allah for them. Certainly Allah is forgiving and kind. (Al-Mumtahinah 60:12)

A study of the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

reveals that the most important *bai'yah* that was taken by him after *Hijrah* was *bai'yah al-ridwan*, which was taken just before the treaty of Hudaybiah. However, as regards the life of the Prophet (SAW) before his migration to Madinah, we find two very notable oaths of allegiance, given to the Prophet by the Muslim visitors from Madinah, or Yathrib, as it was then called.

The nearest point of Mina to Makkah is the valley of Aqabah, and it was here that, during the annual Pilgrimage, six men from Yathrib embraced Islam after meeting with Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The next year, five of them repeated their Pilgrimage and brought with them seven others. These twelve people pledged themselves to the Prophet (SAW), and this is known as the *first pledge of Aqabah*. The wordings of the oath taken by these twelve are identical with the wordings of the *bai'yah* of women, as they appear in the Qur'anic verse quoted above. The next year, seventy two men and two women came from Yathrib and they pledged their allegiance to the Prophet (SAW), and this is known as the *Second pledge of Aqabah*. The wording of this *bai'yah* is extremely significant, but we shall discuss it later.

Please note that there were a number of different pledges taken by the Prophet (SAW) from his Companions (RAA) on various occasions. As a matter of fact, whenever he felt the need to get a firm promise or commitment from his Companions (RAA), the Holy Prophet (SAW) would use the word *bai'yah*. Thus, we see that Imam Nasai (RA), a great teacher and collector of traditions, has enumerated no less than ten different types of pledges that were taken by the Prophet (SAW) from his Companions (RAA) on different occasions. Let me quote them: *bai'yah* that we shall listen and obey, that we shall always say the truth, that we give you the prerogative to prefer anybody over us, that we won't run away from the battle field, that we

promise to engage in *Jihad*, the *bai'yah* that we shall always say what is just, that we shall always be sincere to every Muslim, that we are ready to die for the sake of Allah (SWT), and finally the *bai'yah* that we are ready to leave our homes whenever you order us. What all this means is that *bai'yah* is the only form of commitment and the only basis of organization that is found in the life and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). When the Companions (RAA) were digging the trench to protect Madinah in the battle of *Ahzaab*, they were chanting the following couplet:

نَحْنُ الَّذِيْنَ بَايَعُوا مُحَمَّدًا   عَلَى الْجِهَادِ مَا بَقِيْنَا اَبَدًا

(بخاری 'مسلم' مسند احمد)

> We are those who have pledged ourselves to Muhammad For *Jihad*; and this *Jihad* is to continue as long as we are alive.

The Role of *Bai'yah* in Muslim History

So far, I have mentioned the fact twice that *bai'yah* formed the only basis of organization in the thirteen hundred years long history of the Muslim *Ummah*. It is now time to substantiate this claim with examples from our past. As all of you know, the institution of *Khilafah* established after the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was based on *bai'yah*. Soon afterwards, when it was felt that the all important institution of *Khilafah* is slowly degenerating into monarchy and kingship of a particular clan, we see that Hussain Ibn Ali (RAA), followed by Abdullah Ibn Zubair (RAA), rose to check this trend. Both these movements, though unsuccessful, were based on *bai'yah*. Subsequently, we find that although monarchy established itself with brute force, the kings — still called Caliphs — continued to rule on the basis of *bai'yah*.

Even though there is essentially no separation between faith/religion and government/state in Islam, for all practical purposes this separation did take place during the era of kingship. Consequently, and unfortunately, the institution of *bai'yah* was also bisected into two kinds. The monarchs or the kings would demand a political pledge of obedience from the citizens, and, in addition, there were sufis and mystics who would receive a moral and spiritual pledge of allegiance from the same citizens for the purpose of purification of their souls (*tazkiyyah al-nafs*). This became the basis of *bai'yah al-irshad*.

What is meant by *bai'yah al-irshad*? A person feels the need for a spiritual guide or mentor who would coach and instruct him so that he can become a better Muslim, and, with this purpose in mind, he attaches himself with a pious person who has already purified his own self. This attachment is symbolized by *bai'yah*, a pledge of allegiance on the part of the disciple, who says, in effect, that you are more knowledgeable and more experienced than I am, so you would tell me what to do and what to avoid, and you would monitor my progress and advise and instruct me at every step of the way. This is *bai'yah al-irshad*, and, due to the deplorable decline of the *Ummah*, this is the only type of *bai'yah* that an ordinary Muslim is aware of. It may be noted that this institution is justifiable on the grounds of the *bai'yah* of women, mentioned in the Qur'an, which had a similar nature and purpose.

Please note that all freedom movements, that were launched during the previous century with the aim of liberating the Muslim lands from Colonial rule, were based on *bai'yah*. The Mujahideen Movement of Sayyed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831) in India, the Sanussi Movement of Muhammad Ibn Ali Al-Sannusi (1787-1859) in Libya, and the Mahdist Movement of Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahdi (1844-1885) in Sudan — each one of

these freedom struggles was based on the institution of *bai'yah*. In the present century, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad formed his party, called *Hizbullah*, in 1913, on the basis of *bai'yah*. Similarly, the founding members in the *Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimun* gave their pledge of allegiance to their *al-murshid al-'am*, Hassan Al-Banna Shaheed.

Let me narrate here a very important but largely forgotten episode of the present century. The second convention of Jamiyat Ulama-e-Hind was held in November 1920. It was presided over by *Sheikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mehmood Hassan of Deoband who exhorted and tried hard to convince the *Ulama* belonging to various sects and different schools of thought to accept Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as their leader, to give him their pledge of allegiance, and to start the struggle for freedom and establishment of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. Unfortunately, the *Ulama* did not show any enthusiasm and refused to commit themselves, mainly due to sectarian disagreements.

Another movement of the recent past that involved *bai'yah* was the one launched in the 1930's in order to deal with the menace of *Qadianiyat*. Five hundred *Ulama* belonging to the Deoband school of thought chose Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari as *Ameer-e-Shari'at*, and they gave their pledge to him in Lahore. Although Maulana Bukhari was not a very prominent scholar, we find that people like Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori and Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri were among those who gave their *bai'yah* to the *Ameer-e-Shariat*.

Thus, we see that, throughout the thirteen hundred year's history of the Muslim *Ummah*, the only means and the only approach that was used to organize the masses is *bai'yah*. Whether the issue was that of formation of a legitimate government, the launching of movements to re-introduce the high ideals of pristine Islam, the purification

of souls, or the struggle to liberate Muslim lands from non-Muslim occupation, you will find that, invariably, people were gathered, motivated, and assembled only on the basis of *bai'yah*. The only exception is that when Maulana Sayyid Abul 'Ala Maududi decided to establish an Islamic revivalist party in 1941, he did not adopt the institution of *bai'yah* as the basis of his organization. I have been talking about the "thirteen-hundred year's history" of the *Ummah* only on account of this very exception, as I had to exclude the fourteenth century.

Oath of Allegiance for Joining Tanzeem-e-Islami

I have established Tanzeem-e-Islami on the basis of *bai'yah*. The oath of allegiance for joining Tanzeem-e-Islami is derived from an authentic tradition which gives us the details of the pledge that was given to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), by the visitors from Yathrib, on the occasion of the second *bai'yah* of Aqabah. My assertion is that this tradition contains the whole approach and procedure of how to establish *Hizbullah*, a revolutionary party with the exclusive purpose of making Islam dominant as a politico-socio-economic order. If you are trying to organize a party in order to perform at social level, at community level, or at welfare level, then you can have any type of organization. But a revolutionary party, by its very nature, requires extraordinary discipline and internal cohesion. This can only be achieved if the party is organized on the basis of *bai'yah*.

Let me give you the text of this tradition. It is reported by Ubada Ibn Samit (RAA), and both Imam Bukhari (RA) and Imam Muslim (RA) have included this *hadith* in their respective collections. Please note how comprehensive, how inclusive the wording of this *bai'yah* is, how Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has closed off and sealed all possible doors of conflict.

Ubada Ibn Samit (RAA) reports:

﴿ بَايَعْنَا رَسُولَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ ، فِي الْعُسْرِ وَالْيُسْرِ ، وَالْمَنْشَطِ وَالْمَكْرَهِ ، وَعَلَى أَثَرَةٍ عَلَيْنَا ، وَعَلَى اَنْ لاَ نُنَازِعَ الْاَمْرَ اَهْلَهُ ، وَعَلَى اَنْ نَقُوْلَ بِالْحَقِّ اَيْنَمَا كُنَّا ، لاَ نَخَافُ فِي اللّٰهِ لَوْمَةَ لاَ ئِمٍ ﴾

(متفق عليه)

We pledged ourselves to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) that we shall listen and obey, in favorable circumstances as well as in adversity, irrespective of whether we feel inclined or we have to force ourselves, and even if others are given preference over us. We shall never quarrel with those who are assigned office or authority. But we shall speak out the truth wherever we might be, and, in the matter concerning the cause of Allah, we shall not be deterred because of the admonition or disapproval from anybody.

Note that in every collective effort, whenever there is an issue or problem to be dealt with, almost invariably you will find that numerous opinions and different — often contradictory — solutions are offered. But, of course, only a single, firm decision needs to be taken by the party leader. Now the members of the organization who agree with the decision will be happy in carrying it out. They will be rather pleased at the acceptance of their own viewpoint, and they would naturally be more active in the implementation of that decision. On the other hand, those who disagree with the decision taken at the top are likely to resent it, and they would be reluctant and disinclined to carry out the orders. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) rooted out this source of potential conflict by making the Companions (RAA) promise that they would obey whatever they are commanded, irrespective of whether they feel inclined towards it or whether they have to force

themselves to do it.

Another type of conflict that can arise is in nomination or appointment of persons on various cadres of authority. If a newcomer, even though talented and capable, is made in charge of the affairs at any level, this may cause resentment among the senior ones. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) again sealed this portal of discord by making the Companions (RAA) promise that they would not argue his right to appoint their leaders, and that they would continue to listen and obey even if others are preferred over them.

The exceptional degree of discipline inherent in the pledge of "listening and obeying" does not, however, preclude a member of the Islamic revolutionary party from speaking out what he believes to be the truth, or from criticizing the policies of those in authority, or from pointing out that they are deviating from the straight path. Thus, the wording of the second pledge of Aqabah includes the provision for the freedom of opinion and expression in the words "we shall speak out the truth wherever we might be." Of course, the nature of an organization based on the institution of *bai'yah* necessitates that the final authority rests with the *ameer*. In other words, after all is said and every point discussed and deliberated, the final decision will depend not on the counting of votes but, instead, on the prerogative of the *ameer*.

The oath of allegiance which has been adopted as the basis of joining Tanzeem-e-Islami has three parts. In the first part you consciously testify that there is no god but Allah (SWT), and that Muhammad (SAW) is His bondsman and Messenger, and then you beg Almighty Allah's (SWT) forgiveness for all your past sins and make a fresh and firm pledge to obey Him in the future. In the

second part of the oath, you make a firm promise with Almighty Allah (SWT) that you will refrain from all that He dislikes, and that you will strive in His path to your utmost, spending your possessions as well as your abilities and energies in establishing His *Deen*. Then, in the third part, you give your pledge of allegiance to the *ameer* of Tanzeem-e-Islami, that you will listen and obey all his orders and commands as long as they are compatible with the *Shari'ah*. This last provision – that only those orders are to be obeyed which are within the limits of the *Shari'ah* – is the only addition that we have made in the wording of the second pledge of Aqabah. The rest of the wording is the same as mentioned in the tradition of Ubada Ibn Samit (RAA).

The Importance of *Bai'yah*

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has said that whosoever dies in a state that there is no bond of *bai'yah* around his neck, he dies a death of *jahiliyyah*, i.e., truly speaking, he does not die as a true Muslim. This *hadith* is very categorical, but most of us are under the erroneous impression that if we are attached with a pious person with regard to *bai'yah al-irshad*, then we are fulfilling the requirement of this *hadith*. Not at all! What is meant by the term *bai'yah* in the *hadith* quoted above refers to the collective system of the *Ummah*, and this type of *bai'yah* can exist only in two forms: either there is an Islamic state or the system of *Khilafah* in existence, in which case we have to pledge allegiance to the *khalifah*; if not, then we have to strive in an organized manner to establish such a state. For this, there must be a *Hizbullah*, or the Party of Almighty Allah (SWT), and we must give our pledge of allegiance or *bai'yah* to the *ameer* of that party.

The system of *Khilafah* won't come about easily. It won't drop out of the heavens. It won't be offered to us on

a silver platter. We would have to strive and struggle for it. We will have to exert ourselves to the utmost. We will have to sacrifice our time and recourses and energies and capabilities to make this dream a reality. There are no shortcuts.

We must also realize that nothing worthwhile and nothing substantial can ever be accomplished in this world without a collective effort. If there is no Islamic state in existence, then we have to try and establish it, and this cannot be done without a cohesive and disciplined party. Hence the need to revive the institution of *bai'yah*.

There is only one possibility where we are exempted from having the bond of *bai'yah* around our necks. This is the situation of extreme turmoil and chaos, when every one is bewildered, confused, and perplexed. No one knows what to do, where to go, whom to follow. But if you think that you are living in this condition of extreme turmoil and chaos, and therefore you are excused from having the bond of *bai'yah* around your neck, think again. You are not allowed to live in a civilized society if there is extreme *fitnah*. You are not allowed to avail and enjoy the facilities and amenities of modern civic life if there is extreme *fitnah*. Instead, you are required to give up everything and go to the wilderness. Thus, if a person is living a normal life with his family, and enjoying every facility and comfort that technology and civic life has brought to his door step, and he still claims that there is extreme *fitnah*, then this attitude is nothing short of self-deception. If there is really unbearable chaos, then remember that you are not allowed to live a comfortable life in that condition.

May Allah give us the courage to accept the truth wherever we may find it, and enable us to live as Muslims and to die as Muslims. May Allah (SWT) inspire us to do whatever pleases Him. *Aameen!*

Oath of Allegiance for Joining Tanzeem-e-Islami

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Ever Merciful

I testify that there is no god except Allah; He is one and alone; He has no shareek (associate, equal, or partner), and that Muhammad is His abd (bondsman or slave) and His rasool (messenger).

(May Allah bestow His grace and peace upon him!)

I beg Allah to forgive all my (past) sins, and I return towards His obedience with a sincere repentance .

I make a Solemn Covenant with Allah (SWT) that

I will refrain from all that He dislikes,

I will strive in His path to my utmost,

I will spend my belongings as well as my bodily resources, for the establishment of his Deen and for making His word supreme

____ And for this Purpose____

I give my pledge to **Dr. Israr Ahmad,**

Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami

that I will listen to his orders and obey them as long as they are not against the Shari'ah,

in favorable circumstances as well as in adversity,

irrespective of whether I feel inclined or I have to force myself, even if others are given preference over me.

I also solemnly pledge that I will never quarrel with those who are assigned office or authority,

I will say the truth wherever I might be,

I will not be deterred because of the reproach or disapproval of anybody in the matters concerning the cause of Allah (SWT).

I ask for the succor of Allah (SWT), and I pray for courage and perseverance to stay on the straight path and to honor and fulfill this pledge.

The Sole Aim
before
The Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Quran Lahore
is to disseminate and propagate
the knowledge and Wisdom of

The Holy Quran

the fountain-head of faith and enlightenment
on a vast scale and
on a higher intellectual plane so as
to launch a popular movement for

The Revitalisation of Faith

among the Muslims in general and
their Intelligentsia in particular with the
ultimate objective of bringing about an

Islamic Renaissance

and ushering in, for the second time in history,
the Blessed Era
in which
The True Islamic Way of Life reigned
supreme.